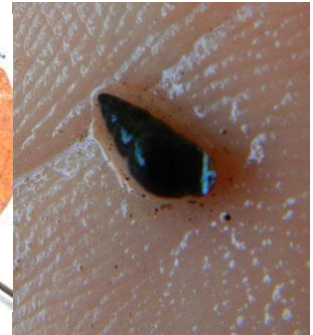


Help stop the spread of invasive mud snails

New Zealand mud snails are attacking Kelsey and Valley creeks. These invasive snails may be tiny, but they reproduce at anything but a snail's pace, spreading rapidly by cloning, and damaging habitat as they spread.

The snails have little nutritional value and crowd out native invertebrates that fish and other aquatic life eat.

New Zealand mud snails have been found in only one other stream in the Lake Washington area, to date--Thornton Creek in Seattle. Able to live for weeks on damp gear, the snails can be easily transported by people, which is probably how they got to Bellevue.



New Zealand mud snails are so tiny, they look like specks of dirt on the leaf above, left. The cone-shaped shell is easier to see in photo above, right. Below, Utilities Watershed Planning Manager Kit Paulsen identifies mud snails on leaves at Valley Creek.

There is no way to control these fast-growing snails once established. That's the bad news. The good news is that residents can help prevent their spread.

- Avoid going into streams, if possible.
- If you must walk in or near a stream, before you leave, drain any water collected in gear.
- When you leave a body of water anywhere, use a brush to scrub off any sediment, organisms, or debris from all boots, clothing, and gear.
- Soak boots in ammonia or 409 for 10 minutes.
- Rinse all gear in potable water and then allow it to completely dry under low humidity conditions for at least 48 hours before using again.



Visit http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/potamopyrgus_antipodarum/ for more information on New Zealand Mud Snails and other proper decontamination procedures.

